

both sitting under the north balcony. Will you stand to be recognized, please. Welcome to the Legislature. Senator Kristensen, your light is next.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Madam President and members of the Legislature. Madam President, were they guests of Senator Cudaback? Nevermind. It...a long story. This amendment causes me some problems from this point of view. If this is adopted, I'd have the following observations. One is there is a presumption, a strong presumption, that the state policy is 60 mile an hour. That's our set speed for the state that only on very limited circumstances would you increase, and here's the reason why. If you're going to shift the policy-making decision from the Legislature to the Department of Roads to increase those speeds, there's not going to be the opportunity for someone else to present the other side and that those speed increase requests will come, and I don't know from whom, I assume from anyone, it could be the chamber of commerce of a town, it could be the county board, whoever, and you're going to get a variety of people, and if one town says, well, they're speeding to get to their town because it's economic development, the next town will do the same thing because they don't want to have that noncompetitive edge. And you scoff, Senator Wickersham, but you should read the record. In fact, the record at the speed limit hearing was that we want a speed so you can get to our tourist sites. We want to increase the speed so people, it will take them less time to get off the interstate and come visit our tourist spot. Amazingly enough, that's true. My guess is that this is probably palatable to enough people. I'm not going to vote for it. I just think it's going to lead to bad policy to increase that speed because I've got a lot of problems here. One of them is the pressure on the Department of Roads from state senators and other people to increase those speeds. But they're also going to have all the people like the South Platte Chamber will come and it will become almost un-Nebraskan not to increase that speed and the Department of Roads won't...they'll be faced with taking hits and losing support for funding or increasing someone's speed. But I would hope that the legislative history here would be that the presumption is the speed is 60 mile an hour, we shouldn't go above that, and if somebody's just plain got to speed, I'd prefer that you have some diversion or immunity from prosecution because I'm also worried about the liability issues. I don't want the state to be placed in a liability position that if I